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## A Critique of Metropolitan News Media

# THE ST. LOUIS JOURNALISM REVIEW

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## St. Louis is ruled by Civic Progress, an elite, shadow government

By Peter Downs

Civic Progress began life as a citizens' advisory panel, serving at the pleasure of the St. Louis mayor. Like Frankenstein's monster, however, it soon burst its bounds and took on life of its own, raising the issue of who was the master and who was the servant.

Civic Progress (CP) is often called the real government of St. Louis. It aims to build a united front of the big business community on issues before the public. Member CEOs are required to support the majority position even if they may privately disagree with it.

An extensive network of front groups and sponsored organizations, which CP built over the years, has become a mechanism for co-opting professionals, labor union officials and executives of smaller businesses into that united front before a policy or development proposal even reaches the public eye. Potential opposition voices, thus, get pushed to the margins and public debate is suppressed or downplayed.

### The beginnings

Civic Progress began in 1953 when Mayor Joseph M. Darst appointed eight of St. Louis' "leading citizens" to an advisory panel. They were Sidney R. Baer, vice chairman of Stix, Baer & Fuller and chairman of the Citizens' Finance Committee and the Traffic Committee of the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce; Arthur A. Blumeyer, president of the Bank of St. Louis and chairman of the fledgling St. Louis Housing Authority; Ethan A. H. Shepley, attor-



H. Edwin  
Trusheim  
(Unavailable)



Andrew C.  
Taylor  
(Unavailable)



John F.  
McDonnell  
(\$850,783)



Andrew B.  
Craig III  
(\$1,062,574)



August A.  
Busch III  
(\$1,878,763)



Benjamin F.  
Edwards III  
(\$972,450)

(\$ = annual salaries)

ney and director of the St. Louis Crime Commission, later president of Washington University; Powell McHaney, president of General American Life Insurance Co. and president of the board of curators of the University of Missouri; former Mayor Aloys P. Kaufman; David R. Calhoun, Jr. president of the St. Louis Union Trust Co.; J. W. (Wes) McAfee, president of Union Electric Co.; and James M. Douglas, former Missouri Supreme Court Judge. Mayor Darst fell ill, however, and the panel floundered for lack of direction. (The story presented here of CP's early years is pieced together from news accounts and interviews with some of the people involved in the events.)

Casting about for a successor to Darst, insurance executive Sidney Salomon settled on Raymond Tuck-

er. Salomon was a former treasurer of the Democratic National Committee, but he could not swing the St. Louis organization behind Tucker as 23 of the 28 Democratic ward organizations rejected his nominee. No matter. Salomon cemented the backing of the business community for Tucker and won the endorsements of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Thus armed, Tucker squeaked out a win over Mark Eagleton in the primary and then coasted to victory in the general election.

Tucker was no dummy. He knew he had the support of neither the Republican nor Democratic party organizations. He needed another power base to get anything done. The only solid base he had was the business community, whose candi-

date he had been. Martin Quigley, a former partner in Fleishman-Hillard, says that Tucker was "a great mayor. His idea of leadership was to stay out of it and turn it over to the establishment and let them handle it."

In early April 1953, the members of the sponsoring committee of Civic Progress submitted their resignations to the new mayor as was "customary for citizens' groups" to do, according to the *Globe-Democrat*. Tucker, however, rejected the resignations, telling the members he wanted them to "continue to serve during his regime."

Soon he appointed ten more people to the committee. His appointees were: August A. Busch, Jr., president of Anheuser-Busch; Edgar

(See CIVIC PROGRESS page 6)

## Danforth in fight with cable industry

By Don Corrigan

After several years of effort to pull in the reins on the cable television industry, Missouri's Sen. Jack Danforth is the closest he has come yet to getting a cable regulation bill out of Congress. Earlier this year, the Senate voted overwhelmingly in favor of legislation proposed by Danforth in a 73-to-18 vote. In July, the House followed suit, approving a cable bill 340 to 73.

"In communities across Missouri, people have had it with cable television monopolies," said Danforth in the afterglow of the House vote. "They have had enough of an industry that is characterized by high prices, poor service, and no competition. If Standard Oil and the railroads were the 'trusts' of an earlier generation, the cable companies are their counterparts today."

The bill that Danforth wants to see delivered out of Congress would:

- Re-regulate cable television rates in areas where effective competition is determined to be lacking.
- Define what should be characterized as basic service.
- Require cable program producers to offer their product to nascent competitors.

• Encourage the potential for "wireless cable" competition by unlocking the program fare of established companies with access rules.

Once Congress returns in September, conferees are expected to complete a finished cable bill after one short session. Legislators will be working against a Sept. 22 deadline, or 10 days before the Congress is scheduled for adjournment. Sponsors of the legislation are fighting some roadblocks being thrown up by cable bill foes, and it is still unclear as to whether President George Bush would sign the cable re-regulation bill.

### At odds with Bush

Danforth and Bush have been at odds on such legislation in previous years. According to Danforth, his legislative initiatives on cable television have been both pro-consumer and pro-business. He contends that the industry is neither competitive nor regulated.

"The number one complaint about cable is price," noted Danforth. "The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) has reported that basic cable rates have risen an average of 56 percent since rates were deregulated at the end of 1986, or more than twice the rate of inflation. The

cable industry attempts to defend its astonishing rate hikes with the argument that programming costs are escalating. But, while cable operators spent a paltry 25 cents of each subscriber dollar on programming in 1984, they spent even less—only 21 cents—in 1990."

### St. Louis rate shock

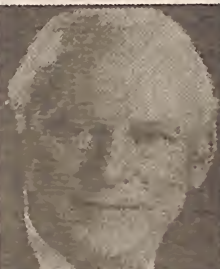
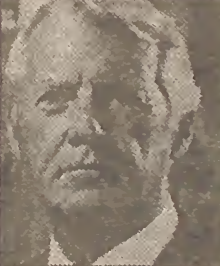
Cable subscribers in St. Louis County can point to rate hikes over the last decade that are more like 500 percent rather than the 51 percent cited in the GAO study. A cable television package in 1982 in Webster Groves, Kirkwood and other St. Louis County communities was priced for about \$5. Those subscribers now must pay \$25.70 for a regular program package.

Consumer outrage in the St. Louis region has been the loudest in the Cencom Cable service area, where a number of cities have begun public hearings on cable franchise agreements that will be up for renewal in the next two to three years. Some cable customers, unhappy with the inability of local governments to do anything about spiraling rates, have suggested a consumer boycott of Hallmark products, since Cencom is owned by Crown Media,

(See COUNTY page 5)



(\$ = annual salaries)

Raymond F. Bentele  
(Unavailable)B.A. Bridgewater Jr.  
(\$680,000)William E. Cornelius  
(\$660,000)David C. Farrell  
(\$1,580,000)Robert Hyland  
(Deceased)Thomas H. Jacobsen  
(\$811,870)David W. Kemper  
(\$525,893)

# Civic Progress decided on a "conscious effort to work through other organizations"

(continued from page 1)

M. Queeny, president of Monsanto; Donald Danforth, president of Ralston Purina; Sidney Maestre, president of Mercantile Trust; Morton D. May, president of Famous-Barr Co.; William A. McDonnell, president of 1st National Bank; Edwin M. Clark, president of Southwestern Bell; Edgar E. Rand, president of International Shoe Co.; Clarence M. Turley, president of Clarence M. Turley, Inc.; and Tom K. Smith, president of Boatmen's Bank.

Some of the members of the committee were Republicans, most notably Kaufman, but most were Democrats. Several already held appointed positions on the St. Louis Crime Commission or the Urban Redevelopment Corp. Harry Wilson, a partner in the public relations firm of Fleishman-Hillard and CP's first secretary, says that many of the original members of CP, while businessmen, also "had reputations outside of the world of business, many as reformers."

## A Citizens' Group

CP styled itself as "a citizens' group to plan and carry out a broad program of public improvements." Its first public task in 1953 was a bond issue to finance the construction of a plaza downtown. The newspapers characterized the vote as a referendum on whether Civic Progress should proceed. A "yes" vote, the *Post* reported, would start the group to studying "a \$219,000,000 list of proposed improvements, select the most urgently needed projects, and work for a bond issue of perhaps \$100,000,000 to finance them."

The bond issue passed and CP set to work with energy. It announced its intentions to hold a mass meeting at Kiel Auditorium to enlarge the group to include labor and other interests besides business.

But it "postponed" the meeting, never to reschedule it. Years later, it would claim that large groups accomplish nothing.

Meanwhile, CP lobbied the state legislature for authority for the city to continue its earnings tax. The legislature agreed, provided the citizens of St. Louis approved the tax within one year. St. Louis Democratic and Republican organizations both opposed the tax. CP organized a "Citizens Committee for Home Rule on the Earnings Tax." On Sept. 30, 1954, voters passed the amendment with 86 percent voting "yes."

Earlier that year, CP organized the campaign for a Metropolitan Sewer District. CP secretary Harry Wilson served as the campaign manager. Voters approved MSD on Feb. 9, 1954.

On Aug. 14, 1954, the business group commissioned the Urban Land Institute, of which Turley was a trustee, "to study the adequacy of the number of the city's proposed expressways, the city's parking needs, its mass transportation system, its possibilities for redevelopment through private and public funds, and the need for adequate public and semi-public facilities."

That study provided the rationale for CP to choose which projects should be funded by a bond issue. A CP source says the study still serves as the basis of the city's redevelopment plans. CP contributed one-half the cost of the bond issue campaign up front, and ordered executives and managers out into the streets as campaign "volunteers." The issue, for a record \$110 million, passed.

**The specific community needs which were met through efforts by Civic Progress were not selected by the community, but the Civic Progress which "arrogated to itself the right to make such decisions."**

Within two years CP also:

- backed a flood protection plan developed by the Army Corp of Engineers for St. Louis;
- successfully lobbied the state highway commission to release construction funds for expressways through the city and the board of aldermen for a new building code;
- raised money to stabilize the finances of the St. Louis Symphony, and for the Pope Pius XII Memorial Library at St. Louis University;
- pushed through a \$39-million public works bond issue in St. Louis County;
- and organized the United Fund, now called the United Way, whose massive fundraising drives CP members still head.

These were CP's glory years. Its members were filled with boundless optimism. Dozens of articles about CP and its members filled the newspapers. *Fortune* and *The Saturday Evening Post* even carried tributes, called respectively "St. Louis Snaps Out of It" and "How to Rescue a City."

## Dissent erupts

In 1955, CP spokesman, August Busch, Jr., attacked the board of aldermen for "obstructing" its projects. Busch directed special wrath at the tradition of "aldermanic courtesy" which enabled aldermen to hold up highway construction in their wards if they objected to the neighborhood destruction it would entail.

Busch tried to start a public campaign to elect only aldermen supportive of CP plans. But opponents of CP were beginning to find their voices. The Small Business Association immediately jumped to the defense of aldermen, arguing that public policy and public works should be the decisions of elected representatives, not private committees.

Such criticism didn't slow down CP. Four months later, Harry Wilensky sang the praises of CP in a *Post* feature titled "20 St. Louisans Leading the Way." Overcoming the opposition of Democratic and Republican organizations, CP got the approval of city residents for a board of freeholders to write a new city charter. The CP slate swept all the seats on the elected freeholders' board, defeating three other slates put up by the AFL-CIO, the Democrats and the Republicans.

The committee seemed set to grasp the golden apple. Since its inception, CP officers had preached against the multiplicity of governments in the area. The new charter would be a step towards "regionalization." It would also make city government more "businesslike" by pro-

viding for a strong chief executive in the person of the mayor, eliminate the comptroller, and reduce the size of the board of aldermen.

Then came the big shock. Wilson, who managed CP's charter campaign, says "no one anticipated the opposition the charter aroused." Television and radio stations donated one-half hour blocks of time during primetime to the CP campaign, says Wilson. Reporters called the campaign to report what they were hearing and suggest ways to improve the campaign. Both newspapers carried big block "Vote Yes" banners above their mastheads. But it wasn't enough. Voters overwhelmingly rejected the new charter in what Wilson says was the biggest turnout ever for a city election.

## Operating through fronts

The defeat caused CP members to re-evaluate their strategy. They continued to push for regionalization, but in a piecemeal fashion. According to one CP source, CP members always have felt tremendous frustration with the "fragmentation of local governments." The general public did not seem to share that concern however, so CP "tried to take an end run around the problem by creating city/county special purpose districts." Civic Progress, says the source, is involved in every one of such districts in St. Louis: the Junior College District, the Metropolitan Sewer District, the Zoo and Museum District, the Regional Health Care Corporation and the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Meanwhile, CP began to fade out of the public eye. Wilson says that after the first 3-4 years "we did our best to calm [press coverage] down, and I think we succeeded pretty well."

Another part of the new strategy emerged at the same time. There began what one CP source describes as a "conscious effort to work through other organizations." The reason for that, says the source, is to try "to get other people involved and active in solving community problems. Civic Progress does not want to be the only organization that can get things done."

Often, CP had to create the "other" organizations. In 1958, CP conceived of and organized Downtown St. Louis, Inc. to promote the downtown as a regional and cultural center. Other organizations it created in the sixties included the Regional Industrial Development Corp., the St. Louis Hospital Planning Commission, the Civic Center Redevelopment Corp., the Greater St. Louis Arts and Education Coun-

cil and the Metropolitan Association for Philanthropy. Most operate on a regional basis.

## Independent, exclusive, self-perpetuating

Gradually, CP ceased to be accountable to the mayor. It was an independent entity, self-perpetuating and exclusive. As executives retired, their successors inherited their berths. New members were added, too: Interco, Laclede Gas Co., Edson Brothers Stores, Pet Co., Reinholdt and Gardner, General Steel Industries, Falstaff Brewing Co., Price Waterhouse, Emerson Electric, St. Louis University, Sverdup and Parcel & Assoc., and Granite City Steel. In 1966, CP membership stood at 31.

Post writer Robert Sanford lauded CP and its accomplishments in a four-part series that year. He praised the absence of accountability of "men who can make decisions about support for a project without having to consult someone else." They bring leadership and money to the city, he claimed. "If businessmen respond to community needs", he gushed, "by organizing men who are willing to work in a positive way for civic projects, and if these men are also the ones who control the charity-improvement funds of big corporations and banks, then the community has a new and effective tool for getting things done."

Critics point out that such a characterization begs the question of who decides what the community needs. Throughout its history, CP arrogated to itself the right to make such decisions.

In 1966, CP responded to president Johnson's war on poverty with a pledge of financial support for "Work Opportunities Unlimited" (WOU) to be administered by the Human Development Corp. WOU was supposed to find jobs for the long-term unemployed, which CP spokesmen understood to mean "Negroes."

In March 1968, CP announced it was breaking with HDC. It would seek federal funds to administer WOU on its own. Using the Watts riot as a justification, CP spokesmen said they would not "play the numbers game," but would refocus WOU to concentrate on "quality not quantity." As part of that commitment, CP set aside \$50,000 for summer jobs for "Negro youth." The Urban League, which itself received money from CP, endorsed the committee's action.

The new program, says Fleishman-Hillard's Wilson, ran for two years until the federal government got a comprehensive job training program underway. Wilson says that Buck Persons of Emerson Electric designed the program, called "B.Y.U." for Business, the YMCA and the Urban League. The Urban League recruited participants and the YMCA provided the training. William A. McDonnell, CP president from 1963-1965, in a speech at the June 28, 1971 CP meeting (later published by the organization as *Civic Progress Inc. . . its aims and objectives*) claimed that "B.Y.U. found jobs for about 1,300 and demonstrated the effectiveness of a business-oriented approach to hiring the hard-core unemployed."

More projects followed: the acquisition of the Spanish International Pavilion Foundation (now part of the Marriott Hotel); the Cervantes Convention Center; transforming the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce into the Regional Commerce and

**That 1954 study provided the rationale for Civic Progress to choose which projects should be funded by a bond issue. A CP source says the study still serves as the basis of the city's redevelopment plans.**







(\$ = annual salaries)



Miles L. Marsh  
(Unavailable)



Andrew E. Newman  
(\$866,660)



Craig D. Schnuck  
(Unavailable)



Brice R. Smith, Jr.  
(Unavailable)



William P. Stirtz  
(\$1,197,778)



Ted C. Wetterau  
(\$1,095,000)



Edward E. Whitacre, Jr.  
(\$1,379,800)

## CIVIC

(continued from page 7)

tively supported the Cervantes Center expansion and domed stadium, the county hotel tax to pay for the stadium, Metrolink and the Lambert Airport expansion. It put up income guarantees to secure an NFL team for St. Louis. Member companies also invested in the St. Louis Blues hockey club and created Kiel Center Partners to develop a downtown hockey arena. According to a three-part series on CP in the *Post* in August 1991 by Peter Hernon, Schoemehl claimed that CP was responsive to him and not vice versa, but when CP endorsed the idea of a downtown football stadium after Schoemehl publicly had attacked it as "unfeasible," it was Schoemehl who reversed himself.

Civic Progress also took a swing at the problem of low-income housing with the St. Louis Equity Fund. Member companies earn federal tax credits for their investments in the fund, which finances construction of low-income rental housing. Such credits are due to expire this year, but Senator Jack Danforth (whose father was a CP member and whose brother is an ex-officio member) introduced a bill to extend them. According to one recent report, however, St. Louis still rates very poorly in the availability of housing for low-income people.

In the county, CP conducted an operations review of county government during H. C. Milford's short tenure as county executive and recommended 25 ways to improve effectiveness. Kerth represented CP on the St. Louis County Economic Development Committee.

Clarence Barksdale became president of CP in 1982. He reformed the organization by initiating strategic planning and establishing an "action area" committee structure. Years before, CP had formed a "dialogue committee" to discuss issues of racism and civil rights. Barksdale added five new committees, focusing on public schools, governmental affairs, health care cost containment, employment and economic development. (When Barksdale's position as president of Centerre Bank disappeared in the merger with Boatmen's, a high-ranking position was created for him by CP affiliated Washington University.)

### Limited membership

Currently, there are 25 voting members of CP and six *ex officio* members: the mayor, the county executive, the heads of the three major universities in the area (Washington University, St. Louis University and UM-St. Louis), and the chairman of the Regional Commerce and Growth Association (RCGA). Individuals who retire as CEOs may continue as emeritus members for two years after their retirement, as Lee Lieberman (formerly CEO of Laclede Gas) and H. Edwin Trusheim (formerly CEO of General American Life Insurance Co.) are doing. Individuals like attorney James M. Douglas, a Tucker appointee, who remained a member for at least 13 years, no longer are welcome. Membership is not always extended to successors: Rod Zimmerman, who became general manager of KMOX after the death of Robert Hyland, has not been invited to replace Hyland at CP.

Kerth says the group "traditionally" is limited to less than 30 under the theory that as a forum for discussion and decision it would be more unwieldy and less effective if it were larger.

Several of the largest companies in the area, such as Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge and Apex Holding, do not belong to CP. Graybar Electric Co. quit this year. To be invited, says Kerth, a company must have "demonstrated a commitment to community and public affairs in the

region. People don't join for fun. Members are expected to share in community responsibilities such as the United Way and arts and education."

Civic leadership is not enough - or St. Louis Blues Chairman Mike Shanahan would have long been invited to join. The harder threshold to cross is to be head of a major St. Louis company, according to CP chairman Edwin Trusheim. His own company, General American Life Insurance Co., he says, "is not a giant, but it has \$7 billion in assets and \$2 billion in income." Even Enterprise Rent-a-car has income in excess of \$1 billion a year. Trusheim, president of CP in 1990-91, challenges anyone "to name 10 St. Louis companies like that that aren't in Civic Progress." (See list at right.)

Commerce Bank of St. Louis is the smallest of the members with only \$214 million in income. Parent Commerce Bancshares, based in Kansas City, however, has income of \$589.5 million.

Several of the largest enterprises in the metropolitan area are not-for-profit enterprises, such as the Daughters of Charity National Health System which has 56 hospitals in 17 states, including DePaul Health Center in Bridgeton. Kerth says that as a practical matter, not-for-profits can't be members because "participation means committing resources to projects and most nonprofits are not in a position to do that."

Civic Progress meets on the last Monday of every month in the exclusive confines of the Bogey Club in Ladue. Exclusivity could be the byword for CP, yet insiders insist their community involvement precludes a

In our judgement, the most effective way to create additional economic activity downtown is through tourism, conventions and sports activities. That's why Civic Progress is focused on them."

Trusheim claims that CP was very instrumental in most of the big development projects downtown: Busch stadium, the Cervantes Convention Center, the Mansion House project and the development of new office buildings along Market St. Another CP source adds that many CP companies "made substantial investments in keeping their headquarters downtown when they didn't need to be there, including Ralston-Purina, Pet, General American, Southwestern Bell, May and Anheuser-Busch." Washington University and St. Louis University invested in redeveloping their medical campuses in the central corridor.

Such investments, says one CP source, help keep downtown St. Louis vital. Trusheim is even more emphatic. Before CP got involved, he says, "downtown was basically dead. More than 30 years had gone by with nothing happening."

### Alternative views

These projects are impressive, but overstate CP's power, says Benjamin Edwards III, CEO of A.G. Edwards and Sons. "It's assumed we have all kinds of clout," he says, "but our record isn't very good. We aren't very good politically. We're 0 for 3 on recent propositions: education (proposition B), the Olympics festival and Forest Park."

Alversie Mitchell, chairperson of St. Louis Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

**Trusheim argues that CP should concentrate on those things to which its member companies can bring to bear their particular strengths and abilities. With many problems, he says, "we have no particular skills, so we would be ineffective."**

narrow outlook. CP members serve on the boards of "hundreds of community organizations" where they get input that, they say, they take into account when making their decisions. Members also seek advice from their corporate staffs and meet regularly with local civil rights leaders like the Urban League's James Buford. Such connections supposedly enable this small, self-appointed group of wealthy, white males to represent fairly the community.

### Recent projects

Kerth vehemently denies that CP was involved in pulling together and electing the "4 candidates 4 kids" slate to the school board. "Civic Progress does not get involved in candidate campaigns," he says. Trusheim, however, says that CP's support of "efforts to put together and elect" that slate of candidates to the school board is one of his organization's most important accomplishments in recent years. Other important projects were trying to stabilize the TWA situation, of which he says "Unfortunately we have not seen the end"; the southward and eastward [stadium] expansions of the Convention Center; the Kiel Arena and "the preservation of the Blues in St. Louis." He concludes that "St. Louis is a better place because of those activities."

Trusheim adds "the central theme of Civic Progress, . . . is that it's critical for the metro area to have a viable downtown. Without it, neighborhoods can't prosper. Downtown can't thrive only on offices and retail. That is basically a weekday activity.

(ACORN), points out that Fleishman-Hillard's campaigns for such CP projects as the stadium, Convention Center and airport expansion equated them with jobs for St. Louis. Yet, at the same time, such CP companies as INTERCO, the Brown Group, Monsanto and Emerson Electric were cutting jobs in the area through plant closings and transferring work to anti-union states or Mexico. It is ironic that Fleishman-Hillard, which represents CP and several of its members companies, also represents the Mexican government in seeking to attract foreign investment to Mexico.

Other campaigns promoted the city's cultural institutions as central to the region's "quality of life." But, says Mitchell, CP companies such as Anheuser-Busch, Ralston-Purina and Boatmen's Bank went after government money and tax abatements, which depressed the quality of life in the city by reducing funds for police, schools and health care.

The hundreds of thousands of dollars that CP member companies donate to the public schools, for example, amount to little next to the \$15 million per year that Superintendent David Mahan estimates the St. Louis Public Schools forego because of tax abatements.

"These people control this city," says Mitchell. "The city goes where they want it. They talk, and buildings go down, whole blocks change. If they wanted to, they could change the social situation. But all they care about is the riverfront. These same people have taken everything out of the city they could, but they really don't care about the people here.

## St. Louis firms not in Civic Progress

H. Edwin Trusheim in an interview with *SJR*, challenged anyone to name ten corporations based in the St. Louis area that are large enough to be in Civic Progress but are not.

Below is a list of St. Louis area for-profit corporations with revenues similar to those of CP members. Excluded from the list are former CP members, subsidiaries of larger national corporations and spin-offs from CP companies.

Company	revenues (in thousands of \$)
Archer Daniels Midland	7,751,300.0
Apex Holding Co.	3,517,215.0
Center Oil Co.	1,800,000.0
Gundaker Realtors	1,614,000.0
McCarthy	914,000.0
Kellwood	807,950.0
Unigroup (dba United Van Lines)	783,000.0
Moorman Manufacturing Co.	700,000.0
Prairie Farms Dairy	658,000.0
Sigma-Aldrich	529,100.0
Thermadyne Holdings	520,000.0
Harbour Group	480,000.0
Angelica	413,000.0

They think it's more important to have a symphony orchestra than decent schools. We wanted to meet with the Mayor and Civic Progress to discuss what the problems are in this city, but the Mayor flatly told us 'No'."

Edwards finds some merit in Mitchell's criticism of CP projects, if not her estimation of its power. He says that CP has been involved with the schools, financing computer purchases, the "writing to read" program and the "caring community" concept for combining social services with schooling, but he would like to see more, such as universal prenatal and infant health care. "I would see priorities as education, housing and streets," he says, "but what gets funded are stadiums, arenas and light rail."

Edwards disagrees with the CP focus on tourism. He was not a fan of the stadium or the quest for a football team. His company does contribute to those projects, he says, because that is what the majority of CP members thought was important. Membership in CP includes a commitment to support decisions of the majority of the members. Edwards thinks that improving the city's infrastructure, public safety and schools would do more to attract new employers than a football stadium or arena.

Trusheim argues that CP should concentrate on those things to which its member companies can bring to bear their particular strengths and abilities. With many problems, he says, "we have no particular skills, so we would be ineffective." For example, he says, on the question of what to do about teenage pregnancy, "we don't bring any particular insight, experience or skills to that issue. . . . It doesn't mean we don't care. It just means we don't know any more what the solution is than anyone else."

On the issue of financing airport expansion, on the other hand, "the airport authority couldn't see how to do it. So we got municipal bond experts from the banks and A. G. Edwards together to figure out how to do it." After that, CP financed the successful campaign for voter approval for the bond issue.

This skills test, says Trusheim, is one of two that the secretary and president apply to proposals to decide if they should be put on CP's agenda. He seems to ignore the skills in the leading educational institutions that are ex-officio members of CP, institutions with considerable expertise in areas like health care.

The second test is whether the project is "important to the community". Of course, CP itself decides for the community what is important.

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gression with anger. Many rappers, such as Boogie Down Productions (BDP) or a Tribe Called Quest, have expressed anger at social conditions without making threats of destruction. Admittedly, many rappers have peddled violence and misogyny, but this is part of a more general trend in commercial culture that can be witnessed equally in Hollywood films and heavy metal lyrics.

### A barometer, not a cause

Like other art forms, rap is a barometer for many of society's ills rather than a cause. In the 1970s, rap had taken the form of innocuous disco banter or streetcorner contests. In the 1980s, rap reflected America's concern with money and conspicuous consumption. In the '80s, it became more concerned with gold jewelry, flashy cars, and exploitation of women. Rap carried the '80s culture of Donald Trump and Michael Milken to an extreme.

As Leland notes, rappers predicted the violence in L.A. years ago. Rap offers a window onto the rage of the under class. Leland says rap's claim to be inner city "reportage" rather than mere entertainment is often just an artistic "conceit." Rap has served, however, as one of the few outlets for the perspectives of inner city youth, who have been excluded from mainstream media.

Rappers like Run D.M.C. and Melle Mel were criticizing the effects of government policy on their neighborhoods in the early '80s in songs such as "It's Like That," "Wake Up," and "Beat Street." This criticism has continued with groups like Public Enemy and BDP. Leland laments rap's popularity, alleging that it promotes racial division, without sufficiently acknowledging its role in offering discontented blacks a public voice that might be beneficial for whites to hear.

The article accuses rap of propagating "a religion of racial authen-

trative scapegoat for a lot of problems, and may in fact be a negative influence in the lives of young people, our study suggests that the number of hours spent in front of the tube is of very little importance in respect to obesity and physical activity," said Robinson, the study's lead investigator.

Robinson warned not to misinterpret results of the study as a defense of television viewing.

"There is clear evidence that children, adolescents and adults can be influenced by what they see on television. Televised messages can influence children's eating behaviors and food choices. When television first becomes available in a community, studies have shown that sports participation declines.

"I will continue to recommend substituting exercise for TV viewing for my overweight patients," Robinson said. The researcher noted that in the United States, the average household spends about seven hours a day watching television—"which I definitely believe is excessive."

The research, sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), compared the number of hours spent watching television after school with measures of body fatness and levels of physical activity among 671 sixth- and seventh-grade girls in four Northern California middle schools in the spring of 1989. The results demonstrated that girls who watched more television were no more overweight than their peers who watched less.

While the girls who watched more television tended to be slightly less physically active than their peers, the difference was so small that it was of no practical significance to their health or well being, said Robinson, a pediatrician and Robert Wood Johnson, Clinical Scholar at Stanford University.

are strengthened by a particularly rigorous measure of fatness which takes into account levels of sexual maturity," commented Robinson, who holds a master's degree in public health in addition to his M.D. degree.

On average the teenagers in the study watched 2.5 hours of televi-

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Trusheim denies that CP has too much power. Whenever the organization seeks enabling legislation or public funds, he says, the public ultimately makes the decision either at the polls or through such elected representatives as the mayor and the board of aldermen.

### A shadow government

Behind its veil of privacy, CP functions much like a government. With Fleishman-Hillard providing staff, it is able to provide facts to bolster its claims, get expert opinions from corporate supported think tanks, provide polls demonstrating support for its positions, and deliver real live people—voters—to testify on behalf of its goals. Many such people will come from organizations created or funded by CP or its member companies.

Earlier this year, the Missouri legislature was considering bill to increase the gasoline tax by six cents a gallon to raise money for highway construction. Many advocates of mass transit wanted part of that money diverted to mass transit. Citizens for Modern Transit refrained from joining them after being so instructed by CP. Citizens for Modern Transit is the principal advocacy group for light rail in St. Louis. Most of its funds come from CP and its

Joel Killen, senior research associate in medicine at the Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention; C. Barr Taylor, professor of psychiatry; Helena C. Kraemer, professor of biostatistics and psychiatry; Darrell Wilson, assistant professor of pediatrics; and psychiatrist Chris Hayward. ■

member companies. Actions such as CP's censorship of Citizens for Modern Transit send a clear message to all CP fund recipients not to contradict CP's public position on an issue.

In most organizations, only a small percentage of members is consistently active and able to exercise *de facto* control. Thus, CP spawned groups can be much broader than the score of big businesses comprising CP, but the CP CEOs can remain in charge. Through such organizations they can create "natural constituencies" for CP backed proposals, co-opting professionals, union officials and small business executives to its side and denying opponents the use of such institutions. If individuals take the initiative to publicly run with CP-approved projects, they can move into leadership positions, letting CP stay in the background to use its members' influence to prod things along when they get stalled.

Civic Progress members appear to work for what they sincerely believe to be the good of the community. In that they are no different from other people who become active in the community. Yet, there are many visions of what is good for St. Louis. A democracy works when people sharing a common vision get together to organize to turn that vision into a reality. The problem with CP is that CP members use the immense resources of their companies to impose their vision on others as the only one for St. Louis. ■

*Leland's article focuses on rap's negative side—the rage, the violence, the racial tension—without a word about socio-economic motivators.*

*There is clear evidence that children, adolescents and adults can be influenced by what they see on television.*